

New publication for IOM Cyprus as AVRR concludes for 2018



IOM Cyprus launches a new publication with migrant stories who benefited from the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme (AVRR)

On the completion of the AVRR programme for 2018, IOM Cyprus published a booklet where migrants tell their story and how they benefited from the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme.

The publication deals with the stories of programme beneficiaries who returned to their countries of origin and benefited from reintegration assistance, which allowed them to make a new, sustainable start in their own country. Several of the beneficiaries created small businesses in countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines and Nepal, by contributing to the development of the local community.

In 2018, 150 migrants benefited from the programme among them vulnerable people, and since January 2016, IOM Cyprus has helped a total of 400 people to return voluntarily. Some of them have received personalized reintegration assistance, aiming at their sustainable social and economic reintegration.

The programme is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Republic of Cyprus. [Read more](#)



Dear Readers

Happy New Year to you and your families. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the first e-newsletter of IOM Cyprus. Through this channel, we aim to keep you updated with the latest news and developments of the IOM office in Cyprus.

The past year was very busy for the office with many initiatives taking place: a national multi-stakeholder workshop on evacuations, the Global Migration Film Festival, the UN Women's Film Days, a family reunification and many more which you will be able to read in this issue.

We hope that you will like this first newsletter of IOM Cyprus and we are looking forward to communicating with you through this monthly edition.

Natasa Xenophontos Koudouna,
Head, IOM office in Cyprus



Re-Health: Migrants gain access to Healthcare

Migrants and refugees can gain access to public healthcare systems in Europe through the "Electronic Personal Health Record as a Tool for Integration of Migrants and Refugees in EU Health Systems", operated between IOM Cyprus and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Cyprus.

Through the creation of an electronic personal health record, migrants and refugees can have access to healthcare services in the Republic and all over Europe. Once they arrive in Cyprus, they can request to register for the creation of an Electronic Personal Health Record.

This record can be accessible in all EU Member-States, ensuring the continuity of care of the migrants and asylum seekers. The record will assist health professionals to follow-up the health of migrants and refugees on the move.

Until December 2018, 1088 migrants and refugees have been registered to the programme and gained access to the healthcare services of Cyprus. These migrants and refugees will be able to receive treatment in any EU Member-State, ensuring continuity healthcare and integration of these people to the local communities. [Read more](#)

Family reunites after 3 years apart



On 22 October, a 29-year-old Somali mother, Samia was reunited with her 6-year old daughter Manar, after three years living separately.

In her effort to leave Somalia and to come to Cyprus, Samia encountered many difficulties, but the biggest challenge was to leave her daughter behind with her parents for three years, in a tense period for Somalia.

When Samia arrived in Cyprus, she applied for asylum and when this was granted, she applied for family reunification, requesting to bring her daughter to Cyprus with her.

The collaboration between the IOM offices in Cyprus and in Somalia and with the support of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus and the Civil Registry and Migration Department, and the assistance of the Cyprus Refugee Council made this family reunification a reality. [Read more](#)

2018 Global Migration Film Festival & UN Womens' Film Days: Celebrating International Migrants Day



Celebrating the International Migrants Day, IOM Cyprus co-organized two film days, during the annual Global-local Migration Film Festival and presented in the "Women's Film Days" a United Nations Country Team initiative.

On 11 December IOM featured stories of people on the move screening at Cine Studio films 'The Merger' and 'Bushfallers' followed by interesting discussions on migration through a media and photographer's lens thanks to contributions by the Ministry of Interior and PIO of the Republic of Cyprus, the University of Nicosia, the Director's Guild of Cyprus and the Ministry of Digital Policy in Greece. [Read more](#)

Within the framework of the Women's Film days, on 17 December, IOM featured stories of women screening at the Goethe Institut films 'Alba' and 'A thousand girls like me', followed by discussions on integration through a woman's lens thanks to contributions by Caritas Cyprus and migrants.

Students who live in Cyprus connect with youth across Southern Europe



"Towards Empowered Migrant Youth in Southern Europe".

Young third-country nationals who live in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain share their experiences through the social media and the local communities and participate in a video and photo contest that will unfold the creativity of the third-country nationals' students who live in Cyprus.

The aim of the programme is to change the negative rhetoric on migration and promoting diversity in educational institutions. Following agreements of IOM Cyprus with the University of Nicosia, Frederick University and the European University Cyprus, TandEm aims to engage students from third countries to share their experiences from Cyprus and Southern Europe. [Read more](#)

IOM Cyprus-MFA: Sharing knowledge on evacuation processes



IOM Cyprus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus joined forces to share experiences on evacuations processes through Cyprus

The national multi-stakeholder workshop entitled "Enhancing Coordination to Support Effective Evacuations Planning through Cyprus", gathered more than 80 participants from embassies, governmental organisations, NGOs and other related stakeholders to share expertise on evacuations of third-country nationals through Cyprus. In the workshop, stakeholders discussed the best techniques and practices of the evacuation processes and shared experiences from countries such as Italy, Lebanon, Libya and Cyprus.

The outcomes of the workshop were very fruitful and raised issues on how to operate evacuations under emergency situations through Cyprus. In his opening speech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, Dr. Nikos Christodoulides, stated that "given its geographical position, Cyprus has a substantial role to play as a "safe transfer hub".

IOM Cyprus Head, Nabesa Xenophonos Koudouna, stated that "IOM's response to crises triggering mass evacuations is inclusive and comprehensive, focused on assisting and protecting people on the move, and especially the most vulnerable among them, before, during and after crises." [Read more](#)

AVRR informs stakeholders on reintegration



The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme of IOM Cyprus organized a seminar on reintegration where stakeholders had the opportunity to learn more about the reintegration strategy of the UN Migration Agency (IOM) and explore ways to implement best practices in Cyprus.

The seminar was an opportunity between stakeholders to exchange views and ideas on the reintegration implemented by IOM Cyprus and the ways it has helped migrants to integrate in their local communities.

In 2018, 150 migrants benefited from the AVRR programme among them vulnerable people, and since January 2016, IOM Cyprus has helped a total of 400 people to return to their country, with dignity and safety.

Furthermore, there were many beneficiaries who received personalized reintegration assistance, aiming at their sustainable social and economic reintegration.